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LETTER DATED 20 APRIL 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government and with reference to the letter dated 13 April 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to you (A/54/78-S/1999/420), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 20 April 1999 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq. The letter states that Iraq is not responsible for the actions of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization and that the Iranian allegations are intended to distract attention from the terrorist organizations that are hosted by Iran and that use its territory as a base from which to infiltrate into the territory of the Republic of Iraq and murder innocent civilian citizens.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 20 April 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I refer to the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations concerning the murder of the Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff Command of the Iranian Armed Forces (A/54/78-S/1999/420). That letter makes claims and allegations concerning Iraq that bear no relation to the true state of affairs. The Iranian Government accuses the Iranian opposition Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) of committing this act, but Iraq is not responsible for the actions of MKO. More important, MKO maintains a presence in other countries adjacent to Iran and also maintains offices and representatives in no small number of other countries of the world.

Iran's false accusations against Iraq can only be interpreted as an attempt to harm Iraq's good name and undermine any move to restore normal relations between the two countries and as an endeavour to change the subject and distract attention from the support and assistance the Government of Iran provides to the bands of turncoats and terrorists that are exemplified by the group led by the traitor Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, calling itself the "Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq", and the collaborationist Da'wah Party. All of these terrorist groups are hosted by Iran, and they use its territory as a base from which to infiltrate into the territory of the Republic of Iraq and murder innocent civilian citizens. Iran provides them with all manner of military and financial support, and Iranian governmental agencies have promoted acts of sabotage and assassinations inside Iraq, most prominently in the case of the criminal assault on the life of Mr. Udayy Saddam Hussein, son of the President of the Republic. We refer in this connection to our letter of 30 December 1996 addressed to you (S/1997/3, annex). Iran has also engaged in criminal and terrorist activities in the Basrah area, Qurnah and Abu al-Khasib to which many innocent Iraqis have fallen victim. Iranian elements have also assassinated a number of religious figures in Iraq for the purpose of fomenting dissent, and the perpetrators were arrested and confessed to the crimes in question. They were handed over to the courts, and they were convicted and sentenced to the appropriate punishments. The Iraqi authorities concerned communicated the details of the confessions of these criminals to Iran and informed it of their connections to Iranian governmental authorities.

I should here like to refer to some of the other incidents there have been. Elements of the Iranian intelligence services and armed bands under the traitor Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim infiltrated from Iran into Iraqi territory in order to carry out a terrorist operation in the Abu Ghurayb area to the west of Baghdad that caused civilian casualties. At 10.05 a.m. on 12 April 1999 an Iranian helicopter landed in the area of separation between the two countries in the Khusrawi and Khanaqin sector, and 12 soldiers of various ranks alighted from it and proceeded to gather information and to reconnoitre the area.

In accusing Iraq, the Iranian authorities are endeavouring to create a pretext and a facade for any acts of aggression they may possibly commit against

Iraq, and they are seeking excuses to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs in violation of the norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of good neighbourliness.

As it categorically denies the allegations made in the Iranian letter, the Government of Iraq condemns these same groundless allegations in the strongest terms. At the same time, it reaffirms its established position of principle condemning international terrorism whatever its source may be. Iraq and its people are daily being subjected by the United States and its dependency, the United Kingdom, to heinous acts of international terrorism, inasmuch as the governments of these two countries are maintaining no-flight zones in the national airspace of the Republic of Iraq, as well as to their frantic attempts to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and to their insistence on maintaining the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq in 1990. The attempts by the Government of Iran to assert false claims and accusations against us can only be interpreted as being intended to advance the designs of the United States and the United Kingdom against Iraq.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq